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Key Note Address

by

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Side Event

At the Margins of the 38th AU Summit

**Theme: Side Event on the further steps for implementation of
recommendation of the Nouakchott Declaration.**

***Theme : Financing Mechanisms as lever for Quality
Education and Skills Development in Africa in the 21st
Century***

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
16th February 2025**

Salutation

Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government,

Esteemed Ministers of Education and other distinguished guests,

Development Partners, Educators, and Advocates for Education,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a profound honour to address this side event on further steps for implementation of recommendation of the Nouakchott Declaration under the theme “ sustainable financing mechanisms for quality education and skills development in Africa “. This discussion is both timely and critical as we collectively seek innovative solutions to ensure equitable, inclusive, and sustainable education financing that empowers Africa’s youth and workforce for the 21st century.

It is to be noted that Education and skills development are not just foundational pillars of societal progress, they are the levers through which Africa can achieve its aspirations for sustainable development, inclusive growth, and global competitiveness. They embody the essence of the AU Agenda 2063 - the “***Africa We Want***”.

Africa is a continent of boundless potential, with over 60% of its population under 25 years old. This youthful demographic is a double-edged sword. When empowered through inclusive education and practical skills development, they become engines of innovation, creativity, and resilience. Conversely, when left unsupported, they risk being marginalized in a rapidly changing global economy.

The Year 2024 was dedicated to Education, with the theme ***“Educate and Skill Africa for the 21st Century”***, which challenged us to reimagine education systems, ensuring they are accessible, relevant, and inclusive. Implementing the Roadmap for Education in 2024 also reminded us of education financing as a major challenge in Africa.

Many AU Member States still struggle with limited resources, competing national priorities, and external financial dependencies, which hinder investments in quality education and technical skills development. If we are to truly unlock Africa’s potential, there is need to prioritize adequate, predictable, and sustainable financing for education at all levels. This will help to anchor equity as our vision for Africa's education, where every African child, regardless of geography, gender, or socioeconomic status, deserves the opportunity to learn, grow, and contribute meaningfully to society.

As we engage in today's dialogue, there is a great need to reflect on three critical areas:

The First is the need to strengthening domestic resource mobilization. The need for AU Member States to enhance investment in education through effective taxation policies, public-private partnerships, and innovative financing models.

The Second is the need to leverage global and regional partnerships, international organizations, development partners, and the private sector to support long-term, sustainable education financing in Africa.

And the Third is to ensure efficient use of resources. There should be visible improvement in transparency, accountability, and impact-driven funding to maximize the benefits of education investments.

Excellencies, the African Union remains committed to advocating for increased and sustainable education financing. Through frameworks such as the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA), Continental TVET Strategy, and the AU Agenda 2063, we call upon all stakeholders to join forces in transforming Africa's education landscape through innovative and sustainable funding strategies.

Excellencies, transformative leadership is essential to advancing our ambitious agenda. As Heads of State and Government, your commitment to education sets the tone for national priorities, mobilizes resources, and inspires collective action. Together, the need to champion policies that ensure inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all Africans.

I am reminded of the African proverb: ***“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”*** The transformative journey of the New Decade of Education in Africa is already on the motion, and the need for us to move together to chart a bold path forward. The bold path that secures a well-financed, resilient, and high-quality education system for every African learner.

As a continent, there is a great need for us to move forward together, committed to financing education and skills in Africa for the 21st Century. The need for us to nurture a generation of empowered, innovative, and resilient Africans who will lead the charge towards the Africa we envision in Agenda 2063.

Thank you.

Asante Sana.

Merci Beaucoup.